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PINCHOT. CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED.

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If conservation hampers development — the country ought to know it

“CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED”

A Specific Answer to a Specific Attack

WITH A FEW WORDS ON THE ALLEGED WESTERN DISCONTENT
WITH CONSERVATION

BY

GIFFORD PINCHOT, 1865-

Reprinted from Pearson's Magazine for May, 1913

FOLLOWED BY

CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED

BY

ED. H. THOMAS

Reprinted for Comparison from the January Number

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"CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED" By GIFFORD PINCHOT

THE FOREMOST CONSERVATIONIST ANSWERS CRITICISMS OF CONSERVATION PRACTICE AND TELLS WHY HE THINKS THE PRACTICE IS FOR THE GOOD OF THE MAJORITY

There is a French proverb—Tell me who are your friends, and I will tell you who you are yourself. With equal truth it might be said of Conservation, and of many another policy and proposal—Tell me who are its enemies, and I will tell you whether the people ought to be its friends. As may be learned from Æsop's fable of The Man, his Son, and the Ass, you cannot please everybody. Moreover, it is far from wise to try.

Of those who are not pleased with Conservation, it may be said in general that there's a reason,—a reason so powerful that it supplies the motive behind one of the most careful

and assiduous campaigns of near truth in recent American publicity. It is small wonder that this campaign, plausible enough to deceive the very elect, should have misled even so experienced, sagacious, and patriotic a magazine as Pearson's, to whose editors, as well as to Mr. Thomas, I am indebted for the welcome opportunity to let the winds of truth blow upon Mr. Thomas's seductive house of cards.

MR. THOMAS says, "The West . . . has no voice in administration, as the forestry bureau at Washington is made up of Eastern theorists."

The office of the Forest Service at Washington is managed by four men. The first of them was born west of the Alleghanies in a public land State, and began his practical acquaintance with Western Forests seventeen years ago, when he became, as I can testify from personal experience, a first-class mountain man. The second, born west of the Rockies, was for ten years a small cattleman in Arizona, then went into sheep raising, and was Secretary of the Arizona Wool Growers Association when he entered the Government Service. He had never been East in his life until he was thirty-four years old. The third went to California when he was ten years old, worked his way through the University of California, and had been for seven years in charge of practical forest work in California, Montana, and Idaho before he was called to Washington. The fourth, born east of the Rockies like Mr. Thomas himself, moved West in 1892, and went into business in the same city, Seattle, where Mr. Thomas is an editor of one of the principal Anti-Conservation journals of the West. He enlisted in the Spanish War, and afterward entered the Forest Service. In all he has been in constant touch with the West and its problems for about twenty years.

Furthermore, of the 147 men in actual charge of the National Forests, all had had extensive Western experience before they were given their present responsible work, and about 80 per cent. were Western men before they entered the service at all. Of the 1,393 Forest Rangers on the rolls June

30, 1912, a little over 99 per cent. were actual residents of the West when they were appointed. The practical work of forest administration in the West is now in the hands of Western men.

MR. THOMAS repeats in substance the statement made in the annual report of the Forester that the National Forests do not yield each year as much as they cost. He mentions an excess of expenditures over receipts of \$3,582,615.19 for the year 1911, and adds, "What would be thought of a private business that would show such a balance sheet?"

The sum of \$3,582,615.19 includes, although Mr. Thomas does not mention it, an extraordinary expense of \$1,086,590.89 for meeting the exceptional outburst of forest fires which followed the driest season ever known in the West. That, however, is by the way. The real answer is that a private business, conducted under the limitations imposed by law upon the Forest Service, and with the same conditions to meet, would present a balance sheet of precisely the same kind. The object for which the Service must be conducted is not to make money for the Government, but to make the forests useful to the largest possible number of people. In doing that work the business methods of the Service need fear nothing in comparison with the best managed of the great private corporations, as was determined by the report of Gunn, Richards & Co., a distinguished firm of business organizers, made June 30, 1908.

The money spent on the National Forests is an insurance against the damage or destruction by fire of some two billion dollars' worth of public property, and against monopoly and extortion when the private

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lands which now supply the bulk of our yearly consumption of timber are nearly exhausted. The timber of the National Forests is increasing in value at the rate of at least fifty million dollars a year. It would be poor economy not to be willing to spend two or three millions annually to insure that immense return.

Ultimately the National Forests will be self-supporting. But in the meantime there is little more reason in complaining that they cost more than they bring in than there would be in complaining that the premiums paid for fire insurance, or the cost of a city fire department, failed to bring in an annual cash return.

MR. THOMAS says the annual cut from the National Forests is “but $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the annual crop.”

The whole annual crop or growth is not, and cannot be, harvested at present on the National Forests, and the reason is not far to seek. When the National Forests were created the best and most accessible of the timber had already been appropriated. The Government took what was left. Three-fourths of the National Forest timber is even yet inaccessible by reason of the lack of transportation. Where it is accessible and salable, the annual crop is being harvested. Much of the more remote timber could not yet be cut even if it were given away.

The suggestion is constantly made that the National Forest timber should be sold below its value, to which suggestion the conclusive answer is contained in the report of a legislative investigation filed with the Governor of the State of Washington April 1, 1910, which report contains and comments on more than a hundred cases of sales of State timberland for less than it was worth. There is no safe and practicable way to dispose of Government timber except for what it will bring in the open market.

SPEAKING of the Mount Olympus National Monument which lies within the Olympic National Forest, Mr. Thomas says, “On this reserve no one can cut a stick of firewood, prospect a ledge of mineral, catch a fish or shoot a bird. Instead of restricting its boundaries to the base of Mount Olympus, the monument covers 608,640 acres of the heart of a known mineral region.”

Mr. Thomas has evidently been misinformed. If he will go and camp in the Olympic National Monument he will find by practical experience that he can cut all the sticks of firewood he needs, that the only limit on the fish he can catch will be his personal skill and sense of sportsmanship, and that he can hunt buck deer from September 1 to November 1, and shoot grouse from October 1 to January 1, and shore birds and water fowl from October 1 to February 1. There are no restrictions whatever on fishing and hunting within this Monument except those imposed by the game laws of the State of Washington.

The Olympic National Monument was created with its present area at the request of a congressman from the State of Washington, who presumably represented the wishes and best interests of his State.

If there is mineral within this National Monument it will, of course, be opened to development. At the time the monument was created it was not known to include a mineral region, and there are said to be strong doubts whether it does so now, although a vigorous attempt is being made on that ground to have the land restored to the public domain.

Whether there is mineral or not, this area does contain valuable timber. In that connection it may be well to recall what happened when over 700,000 acres of heavily timbered land in the Olympic National Forest were restored to the public domain and opened to entry in 1891, on the plea that it was chiefly valuable for agriculture. *Within ten years 524,000 acres of it had passed into the hands of men who held it exclusively for its timber. One man had acquired 81,530 acres, and five had 178,000. And of this whole vast timbered area, after ten years less than one acre in a thousand was actually under cultivation.*

MR. THOMAS also says, “Waterpower sites on the public domain were withdrawn without provision for their future utilization. The city of Bellingham in the State of Washington is served with power right now generated in British Columbia, because progress on waterpower development in the Mount Baker region has been halted by the government.

“The pretext for these withdrawals is that they are intended to prevent monopoly,

and this in a region where monopoly is impossible in the very nature of things."

The waterpower sites were withdrawn to give Congress an opportunity to regulate their use. They are still withdrawn solely because of the persistent refusal of the waterpower interests to allow the passage of a law, such as the Lever bill, now before Congress, that would insure the use of the public power sites without monopoly. These power interests often work anonymously, but the list of their spokesmen includes such names as Frank Short of California, Francis Lynde Stetson of New York, Wm. P. Lay of Alabama, and T. R. McKee of the General Electric Company. If there has been failure to develop, the responsibility lies directly upon the men who have blocked the unremitting attempts of the Conservationists to get a reasonable law that would open these sites to development, and hardly less upon newspapermen, like Mr. Thomas, who make it easy for Congressmen to defeat the true interests of their constituents by misrepresenting the facts and throwing the blame on the wrong people.

In this they are not always successful. For example, Miles Poindexter of Mr. Thomas's own State of Washington, was elected to the United States Senate mainly on the Conservative issue, standing against Mr. Thomas and with me, and on that issue carried Mr. Thomas's own city of Seattle.

To return to our argument, in the National Forests the power sites are now and have for years been open to development under the act of February 15, 1901, under which 274 permits have been issued by the Forest Service and 139 water-power plants built, in addition to 28 which are now in process of construction. I do not know why Bellingham gets its power from British Columbia, but I do know that the Mount Baker region is in a National Forest, and that it is open to power development under the same conditions which permitted the construction of power plants in other Forests.

Is waterpower monopoly in the State of Washington impossible, as Mr. Thomas declares? A report of the Commissioner of Corporations published in March, 1912, shows that the General Electric group of power companies controls forty per cent. of the commercial waterpower developed

and under construction in the United States, while the officers and directors of the General Electric Company and its three subsidiaries control twenty-four corporations which operate hydro-electric plants, over fifty public service corporations, and a number of railroads and factories, and over fifty banks and financial houses. This same powerful group controls seventy-two per cent. of the waterpower in Colorado, fifty-eight per cent. in Oregon, and fifty-five per cent. in Mr. Thomas's State of Washington, in which two corporations have already succeeded in securing nearly three-quarters (seventy per cent.) of all the waterpower yet developed. Comment is unnecessary.

MR. THOMAS: "Several years ago a large coal land withdrawal was made in Whatcom County, Washington, and, through department ignorance of geographical conditions, Bellingham, a city of 30,000, was included in the withdrawal."

This withdrawal, like all withdrawals for similar purposes, affected only certain kinds of land. It had no more effect on land within the city limits of Bellingham than it had on land within the city limits of New York. It respected all existing claims and property rights of every kind, and had to do only with coal, oil, gas, and phosphate rock. All other minerals may be freely located and developed within the area withdrawn, and land may be taken up under the Homestead Laws, with a reservation of the underlying coal to the United States. So little does the withdrawal restrict the development of the region that, although Mr. Thomas evidently does not know it, it is still (Feb. 25, 1913) in effect. Such a withdrawal might be made to include the land beneath Mr. Thomas's office in Seattle without in the least interfering with his rights or his business.

REFERRING to coal claims in Mount Baker, Mr. Thomas complains of delay in granting patents when the coal is needed (as it is) and adds, "This is one case of department stupidity and neglect, but it is not an isolated case. It is typical of the manner in which all matters pertaining to the public domain have been handled."

Sixteen coal entries were made in this field. Half have already been patented, five

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of them within six months after entry. Several of the claims are now under investigation. This seems to be one more case of holding the Government responsible when in reality there is no valid basis for complaint of delay.

BUREAU ignorance of forest conditions in the far West,” says Mr. Thomas, “is dense beyond belief,” and cites in support the case of a forest ranger who, in 1899, was instructed to blaze out the lines of his reserves, which covered an area about half as large as the state of Connecticut, and patrol its boundaries every day.

This anecdote of fourteen years ago dates from a time long before the present National Forest policy was in existence, and six years before the care of the National Forests was transferred from the General Land Office to the Forest Service, upon whose efficiency it can therefore have no bearing. This was the period, unless I am mistaken, when not a single man in the Division which had charge of the National Forests at Washington, had ever seen or set foot in one of them. I could myself give Mr. Thomas other cases from that almost forgotten time which are even more striking. Take, for example, that of two men, also in the State of Washington, who were instructed to buy rakes and rake up and burn the down timber on more than a thousand square miles of heavy forest. Neither of these stories, however, has anything to do with the present subject of discussion.

MR. THOMAS: “Sales on the 11,684,360 acres of forest reserve in the state of Washington have aggregated 95,204,000 board feet in 14 years, or less than 7,000,000 annually. Decay is destroying nearly a billion feet of timber annually, so that cutting has not reached 7 per cent. of the decay loss.”

The facts are that in the eight years, 1905 to 1912 inclusive, during which the Forest Service has had charge of the National Forests, 415,512,900 feet of timber has been sold from the National Forests of the State of Washington. The average cut during that period was not seven, but 17½ million feet annually. For the last three years the cut has averaged a little over thirty million feet, and during the last year it reached 37,000,000 feet.

The total stand of merchantable timber in the National Forests of Washington is estimated at about ninety billion feet. This includes all classes of timber, the thrifty and growing, as well as the over-mature. There is undoubtedly some loss from decay. It is, however, but gradual; and Mr. Thomas's figure of one billion feet a year is preposterous. While it seems to be well within Mr. Thomas's average limit of error, it is an overstatement by more than four to one.

A GAIN Mr. Thomas refers to an alleged loss to the States, “which have had taken from them areas to be held in perpetuity as undeveloped wilderness on which there is no taxable or revenue-producing property.”

Let us see. Apart from the fact that more than 600,000 persons every year engage in the use or development of National Forests, the Western States now receive for their schools and roads, in lieu of taxes, twenty-five per cent. of the gross revenue from the National Forests. Up to January 30, 1912, they have thus received \$2,606,400, of which \$115,205 went to the State of Washington. The present Congress has set aside an additional ten per cent. for building roads, and over \$200,000 has already been made available. In some places the proceeds from this thirty-five per cent. of the gross revenue already exceeds what would be produced by taxation under private ownership. In others it still falls short. In the end it will surely exceed it everywhere.

IN most of the Western States, in the areas locked up, are lands belonging to the commonwealth. Washington, for instance, has nearly 600,000 acres of school lands worth from \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 within the eleven reserves plastered over its area. Idaho and Montana fare similarly.” Thus Mr. Thomas.

This statement probably refers to a decision of the Secretary of the Interior that the creation of a National Forest before public surveys have been made defeats the claims of certain States to school lands in the National Forests, while giving them the right to make indemnity selections elsewhere. This decision of another department is controlling on the Forest Service, which nevertheless has steadily recognized

the moral right of the States to these lands, has refrained from cutting timber on them except in agreement with the States, and has vigorously insisted that the equities of the States must be allowed and satisfied by exchange. On February 15, 1912, a final exchange of this kind was made with South Dakota. On June 4 last, a similar exchange of certain lands was made with Idaho, and an exchange that will satisfy all of Idaho's claims is now nearly complete. As soon as legislative authority can be secured the same arrangement will be made with Montana and other States.

While I was Forester, I made a similar proposition personally and repeatedly to the Land Commissioner of the State of Washington, but Mr. Ross evidently preferred a cause of quarrel to the satisfaction of the State's claims, and my suggestion was always rejected.

MR. THOMAS: "One third of Washington's total area is reserved. On these reservations there is no industry, no settlement, no development, though twenty per cent. of the lands within them are arable and capable of settlement, and another twenty per cent. mineral on which the forest growth is inferior and practically valueless."

If it were true, this would be by far the most important paragraph in the whole article. There are agricultural and mineral lands within the National Forests, about two (not twenty) per cent. of the former, and an unknown and for the present unknowable amount of the latter. Are they tied up?

Within a year after it took charge, the Forest Service itself proposed and on June 11, 1906, secured the passage of an act to open to settlement any lands in National Forests which were more valuable for agriculture than for forest purposes. Under this law, 1,213,000 acres have already been opened to settlement for the benefit of over 12,000 settlers. The work is proceeding so rapidly that within three years, in spite of the huge area of the National Forests, it will have been completed.

Most of the agricultural land still owned by the Government in the National Forests is heavily timbered, and worth from two to twenty times as much for the timber as for the land. To give the timber with the land would merely invite speculation in-

stead of promoting settlement. So the Forest Service first sells the timber, and then the land is opened to settlement, by which arrangement the imitation homesteader is eliminated. The effect of giving the timber with the land is well illustrated by the Olympic Forest elimination cited above.

How then as to the mineral lands? Are they open to development?

Every season there are 45,000 miners and prospectors in the National Forests. The prospector is welcome. He may and does search the Forests at will. He cuts without charge the timber he needs for his claim. He is often aided by the roads, bridges, trails, and telephone lines built by the Forest Service. Of all the false charges made against the Forest Service, there is none more perfectly false than the charge that the National Forests are closed against mineral development. If the well-established policy of the Forest Service were not proof enough, there is the law of June 4, 1897, which specifically provides that the National Forests shall be open to prospecting and mining.

MR. THOMAS: "Mr. Graves maintains that it is profitable to continue forestry on lands adaptable to agriculture. But is it a wise national policy which seeks to perpetuate forest growth at 33- $\frac{1}{3}$ cents per acre per year on land which properly cultivated will produce from \$50 to \$500 per acre per annum? If it is, then production has ceased to be a fundamental element of economics."

This statement would be important if it were true. The simple but conclusive answer is that Mr. Graves holds no such opinion, and that already a million and a quarter acres of agricultural land in the National Forests have been opened to entry by twelve thousand settlers under a policy initiated by the Forest Service in 1906 and in vigorous effect to this day.

MR. THOMAS says: "The entire 11,684,000 acres of National Forests of the State of Washington, more than a fourth of the State's total area, contains exactly 34 miles of wagon road."

This statement is but twenty-six hundred and sixty per cent. out of the way. The fact is that the National Forests of the State of Washington contain 938 miles of

road and 1,491 miles of trails, of which the Forest Service itself has actually built more miles of road than Mr. Thomas allows altogether, and in addition more than a thousand miles of trails.

AS matters stand,” says Mr. Thomas, “only the very wealthy can bid at such sales”—the sales of timber by the Forest Service.

Again important if it were true. The fact is that ninety-nine per cent. of all the timber sales made during the last fiscal year were for amounts under \$5,000 and 97 per cent. for amounts under \$1,000. Not only so, but over 3,000 small operators cut 63 per cent. of the timber cut during the year, while more than 38,000 permits for free timber were issued to settlers and prospectors. With the growing monopoly of Western timber, it will soon be the National Forests alone that give the small lumberman a chance.

MR. THOMAS: “In the Philippine Islands with 116,000 square miles, there are many fine forests, but up to last October no National Forests had been created there.”

This statement of Mr. Thomas’s is within about forty million acres of being correct. Over ninety-nine per cent. of the forests of the Philippine Islands, or 59,500 square miles, are forest reserves controlled and managed by the United States Government through the Bureau of Forestry of the Philippines, precisely as the National Forests in the United States (likewise called forest reserves until 1905) are controlled and managed by the United States Government through the Forest Service. The names used to be the same, the purposes are the same, the general lines of policy are the same; and of this I speak with some confidence because policy and purposes were embodied in a report made by me to Mr. Taft while he was Governor of the Philippine Islands.

MR. THOMAS: “Alaska to-day consists of a few towns and mining camps governed by United States marshals and surrounded by alien territory on which Alaskans can venture as trespassers only. It is rich in every natural resource, but these resources are as worthless as the minerals in the moon. They can’t be

touched by the people who require them.”

This statement is fully as accurate as that just quoted about the Philippine Islands. First, any Alaskan can go freely upon any public land or National Forest in Alaska without committing trespass of any sort. Every foot of it is open to the freest access. Second, the resources of Alaska “can’t be touched by the people who require them” to the following extent:

In 1912, there were sold from the National Forests of Alaska, 45,000,000 feet of timber in 355 sales.

Every kind of mineral except coal is freely open to development. During the past year, the mineral resources of Alaska which “can’t be touched by the people who require them” produced copper to the value of \$4,904,715 and gold and silver to the value of \$16,031,705, while the furs which “can’t be touched” yet were touched to the value of \$728,554.

Although it is doubtful whether Mr. Thomas had fish in mind as one of the natural resources he was describing, it is worth while noting that the untouchable salmon resources of Alaska yielded during the past year \$16,459,036.

THE law,” says Mr. Thomas, “as the Department interprets it, is that no man can acquire a coal claim unless he acquires it ‘for his own individual use and benefit.’ And ‘own individual use and benefit’ is capable of no elasticity. Nowhere in our statutes is there another phrase so rigid.”

There is little fault to be found with this statement except that it is not so. Such provisions are common in our public land laws. For example:

The Homestead Act (R. S. 2290) says: “The entry shall be made in good faith for the purpose of actual settlement and cultivation and not for the benefit of any other person, persons, or corporation.”

The Timber and Stone Act (Act of June 3, 1878, Sec. 2) says: “The applicant to purchase must state under oath that he does not apply to purchase land for speculation but in good faith to appropriate it to his own exclusive use and benefit, and that he has not directly or indirectly made any agreement or contract in any way or manner with any person or persons whatsoever, by which the title which he may acquire from the Government may inure, in whole

or in part, to the benefit of any person except himself."

MR. THOMAS assumes to take issue with the conservation policy, yet says: "A coal land leasing law in 1907 would have accomplished all that could have been done under private ownership."

Mr. Thomas is evidently not aware that immediately upon the withdrawal of the coal lands in 1906 the Roosevelt administration made every effort to secure the passage of a coal land leasing bill for opening them to development without waste and without monopoly. Every year since an effort has been made by the friends of Conservation to pass similar legislation. That we have not succeeded was directly and solely due to the attitude of the men (Guggenheim and others) who preferred to see no legislation enacted rather than legislation which would prevent speculation and monopoly in coal, and who were supported by Mr. Thomas's paper, the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, in their successful effort to prevent the passage of a coal land leasing law.

It does not become the men who opposed this legislation at the time to express regret now that it did not pass, without at least acknowledging their share in defeating it. If they had allowed it to pass, the just complaint that Alaska is not allowed to use her own fuel could not now be made. It is a curious fact that the men who were directly responsible for locking up the coal of Alaska, first by their unsuccessful attempt to have it monopolized, and second by their successful effort to prevent its development under conditions that would effectually prevent monopoly, are now the loudest in lamenting a condition which but for them would never have taken place.

MR. THOMAS: "The remedy for our Conservation bungle is simple . . . Classify the public lands. These four words contain the cure."

For once Mr. Thomas is almost right. The classification of the public lands is not the whole cure, but it is a part of it, and the United States Forest Service has done its full share toward that end. Both before and since I left it, it has given its best attention to segregating agricultural lands from lands more valuable for forestry. It

has opened a million and a quarter acres of the true agricultural lands to entry, and is protecting the lands more valuable for timber against the land grabbers. It has eliminated from the forest boundaries more than ten million acres of lands more suitable for other uses. It ascertains the mineral character of lands claimed under the mineral land laws, and in many ways gives practical effect to the fundamental principle of any wise public land classification policy, the principle that each parcel of land must be put to that use in which it will contribute most to the commonwealth.

IT is one of the commonest charges against the Forest Service, because it is so easy to make, that it "Nullifies the acts of Congress," indulges in "Bureaucratic government," to quote again Mr. Thomas's language, and generally does as it pleases without regard to the law or to certain kinds of prophets.

The Forest Service does disregard prophets of Mr. Thomas's kind for reasons which I hope have already appeared to the reader; but if it had disregarded the law that fact would long ago have been judicially established. The truth is that the Forest Service is law abiding with such completeness that in no single case has any court of last resort declared any action by the Forest Service to have exceeded its legal powers, and this includes two decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States. The Forest Service has frequently applied the law in ways that were distasteful to certain special interests, but when the final test of judicial decision has been made, it has been proved without exception that the Service had respected the law and acted within its legal powers.

LIKE so many others who attack it, Mr. Thomas does not understand what Conservation means. "Conservation," he says, "has been intrusted to a bureau of the Agricultural Department." It is doubtless the Forest Service which Mr. Thomas had in mind.

A portion of the work in Conservation is indeed intrusted to the Forest Service, but the statement might be accepted as more accurate if Mr. Thomas had not omitted to mention that other portions are intrusted to five other Bureaus in the Department of Agriculture, such as the

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Bureau of Soils and the Bureau of Plant Industry; to five Bureaus in the Department of the Interior, such as the General Land Office and the Bureau of Mines; one in the Department of Justice, charged with the enforcement of the public land laws; and three in the War Department, which deal with the control and development of navigable streams (including waterpower) and with the conservation of the natural resources of military reservations and the Philippine Islands. In other respects the statement that conservation is intrusted to a single bureau appears to be beyond criticism.

Mr. Thomas's article presents an embarrassment of riches to the man who will look up the facts. Richer digging is seldom found, but the foregoing samples will suffice. I should have been glad to touch, among other things, on the question of the Chugach National Forest, which was not "created under a false pretence" and which does not "exclude the only timber worth while in Southern and Southeastern Alaska," and upon the whole question of coal and other monopolies attempted or achieved by the Guggenheim Syndicate. But perhaps enough has been said to raise a reasonable doubt whether after all the grabbers have had all the right on their side.

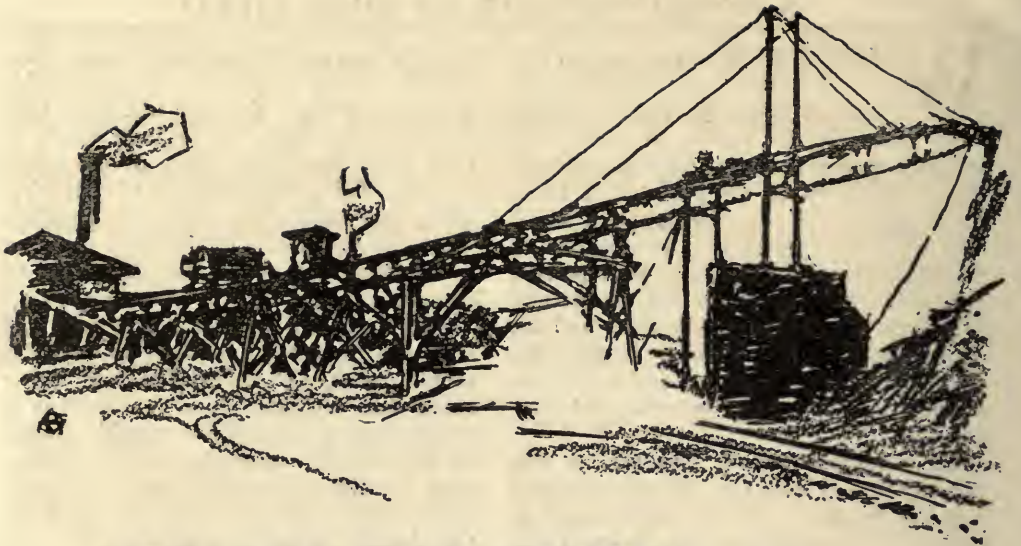
There are three principal sources of opposition to Conservation in the West. First, the men who came out as pioneers,

and who can not realize that the time when everything was free could not last and has gone by. Second, the men who have been checked by Conservation in their efforts to grab more than their share of the public wealth. Third, men interested in development, and rightly so, who have been deceived by the stream of lies on the subject of Conservation put in circulation by its enemies.

These men are opponents only until they learn the facts, but until they do their discontent with Conservation is no better based than the hostility of the Romans of Nero's time to the Christians, which rested on the current fable that the Christians were enemies of humanity, habitually murdered little children, and worshiped an ass's head.

I do not say that the Forest Service is free from the common human faults, but I do assert that its work is peculiarly necessary, unusually hard to do and remarkably well done.

The pity of it is that reckless perversion should turn against it some men who are naturally its friends, and so should make still more difficult the enormous task of wisely opening to public use the natural resources on an area as large as all the States from Maine to Virginia, and doing it with the least practicable restraint to the individual, with the largest benefits to the people generally, and without monopoly or unnecessary waste.



CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED

by ED. H. THOMAS

HOW CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED THREATENS TO DESTROY THE RESOURCES WE ARE TRYING TO CONSERVE AND BESIDES AIDS PRIVATE MONOPOLY IN THREE WAYS

Here is a first-hand look at the conservation of our natural resources as practised. See how you like it. You may think it strange that the article beginning on page 51 should advocate government ownership of the coal mines as a means of serving the people when the government has failed so signally in its conservation policy which is meant to serve the people. The conservation policy is all right. The conservation practice seems to be all wrong. That's all there is to it. Certainly there would be no benefit to the people if the government handled the coal mines as it is handling the conservation matter. Conservation as practised serves private monopoly. It is the people's own fault. They—you—are the government. Wake up and show some interest in things. You'll get just as good, just as an efficient government as you demand. You are the government. If conservation is a rank failure as a benefit to you, it's your fault. Find out what is the matter first; then see what you want to do about it. You can find out what is the matter with our pet "use of our natural resources without waste" in this article and there's a whole lot the matter with it. The Democratic Platform promised some conservation practice. Let's have it.—EDITORS.

CONSERVATION has been defined by its chief exponent as the "use without waste of our natural resources for the benefit of all the people."

When the conservation movement started

seriously, little more than a decade ago, it was welcomed by all classes except the professional land, timber and coal grabbers, and by all sections of the country. The West had learned the lesson of the East

WESTERN resources have been locked up by blanketing the public domain with reserves; coal lands, oil lands, etc., have been reserved as national forests.

by observation and example, and did not want to see its great forests destroyed as the walnut and oak groves of Ohio and Indiana and the maple orchards of New England were annihilated.

The national parks have met popular approval. They have been perpetuated for a worthy purpose, and actually serve that purpose, which is to save and hold for all alike for all time wonderful and inspiring objects of nature.

Our national forests would meet with the same approval if they served the purposes which they purport to serve.

The popular conception of conservation is that it permits the wise use, and prevents the wilful waste, of the natural resources still to be found within and upon the public domain.

Conservation has been intrusted to a bureau of the Agricultural Department, which has been permitted to grow arrogant and wasteful without reproof. This has gone on until conservation now actually threatens with destruction the very resources we are trying to hold for wise use and against profligacy.

The West sees this. The East does not. The East, however, is acquainted with theoretical conservation only. The West is acquainted with conservation as it is practised. The radical conservationist affects to believe that Western opposition is due to the alleged fact that every Westerner is either an active or a passive land thief.

As a matter of fact the average Western man is as honest as the average Eastern man, and the public conscience is as active an entity West as East, therefore there must be another reason.

In the first place it is the West and not the East, North or South which has been conserved. The West is carrying the burden for the whole nation for, with the exception of 163,171 acres in Michigan, 674,970 acres in Florida and 65,950 acres in Porto Rico, our national forest reserves, 190,328,733 acres in all, lie in the states west of the Mississippi and within the territory of Alaska.

The man who has read only the Forestry Bureau's circulars and press matter knows only one side, the side of the theorist and the radical; what the publicist with a college course knowledge of forestry has to say of the purpose and work of the forest service. Out in the states where conservation is going on, and where men can see for themselves, results are apparent.

Conservation has piled up a continuous deficit, and at the same time has permitted an appalling waste of the very resources it purports to save.

A bulletin issued by the Forest Service under date of October 30, 1911, gives the total area of all the national forests as 190,328,733 acres. Only two states of the Eastern half of the country, Michigan and Florida, have national forests within their borders. With Porto Rico the total area of forest reserves east of the Mississippi is 904,690 acres. Alaska and the West contain all the balance.

Right here is found an unequal distribution of a great national burden. The West carries practically all of it, but has no voice in administration, as the forestry bureau at Washington is made up of Eastern theorists.

A statement issued by Forester Graves under date of September 12, 1912, gives an estimated stumpage for all the forests under the service of 600,000,000 feet board measure. In his 1911 report Mr. Graves estimates annual new growth on the reserves at 3,273,690 feet. In other words that is the crop.

Total timber sales on the reserves for the 7 years, 1905 to 1911 inclusive, was 1,901,532,000 feet, or less than 60 per cent. of any single season's growth. The average annual cut for this 7-year period was only 271,647,000 board feet, or about eight and one-half per cent. of the annual crop.

Total cost of administration for the past five years is shown on pages 12 and 13 of the chief forester's report for 1911. It aggregates \$18,164,984.56.

The total revenues for the same period, as shown in the same place in this report,

NORTHWESTERN cities have to get their power from British Columbia because water power sites have been withdrawn without provision for their future use.

400 years. This is a production of $33\frac{1}{2}$ cents a year per acre. Mr. Graves maintains that it is profitable to continue forestry on lands adaptable to agriculture. But is it a wise national policy which seeks to perpetuate forest growth at $33\frac{1}{2}$ cents per acre per year on land which properly cultivated will produce from \$50 to \$500 per acre per annum? If it is then production has ceased to be a fundamental element of economics.

Forest preservation as practised has retarded mineral as well as agricultural development in every state where there are any considerable areas within the reserves.

An opportunity for comparison is afforded by those national forests in the state of Washington which lie along the Canadian-American boundary. Locked up in these areas are long and fertile valleys forested at present, and in the extreme mountainous parts are treeless areas highly mineralized.

South of the International line in the state of Washington is one of these mineral areas. More than three-fourths of the northern tier of counties, however, are swallowed up in national forests. Mineral and physical characteristics in both British Columbia and Washington are identical. The line, geographically, is imaginary. Topographically and quantitatively it does not exist. As between development, however, and lack of development, that line exactly traverses the 49th parallel of latitude, for the mines of the region just north of the International line, the Boundary and the East and West Kootenay districts, produced some \$11,000,000 last year, while those to the south yielded only about \$800,000, and all but an insignificant fraction of this came from the mines of Republic, located in a part of Ferry County happily not included in any national forest.

In creating the forestry service it was not intended that mining and prospecting should be discouraged, as Congress provided legal means to carry on both occupations within the reserves themselves, but here, again, the forestry bureau has transcended its creator.

It has abrogated the laws of Congress, not by direction, not by any positive act, but by indirection and negation.

If the forestry service were to sell and cut a billion feet of timber annually on the reserves in Washington State alone it would have from \$2,500,000 to \$3,000,000 annual revenues, whereas the revenues from that source have not yet exceeded an average of \$10,000 per year, and the price of lumber would go down, as I will show later.

With such revenues, roads could be built and mining encouraged on the reserves under the plain provisions of the laws of Congress, and that without waste of timber resources, for a billion feet of lumber sold and cut annually would not exceed either natural decay or new growth.

South of the boundary mining and prospecting are permitted to languish because of lack of roads. The land is held in reserves by the federal government. Neither state nor county has any taxable property within those reserves. Prospectors are not men of means or they would not be prospectors. To discover mineral which could not be developed because of the lack of the most primitive means of transportation would be of no benefit, so prospectors have learned that there is little or nothing to be gained working over government reserves.

In the mining regions of British Columbia are many hundreds of miles of road of the very best character, all built by the province. It is possible to secure immediate government aid for roads into any new region north of the boundary where mineral has been discovered.

Southern British Columbia is full of American prospectors and miners. They find encouragement there, but find only discouragement in the same identical mineral belt south of the line, a belt capable of the same production as the British boundary camps.

Conservation as practised is the cause of it all. In the British camps along the international line there is a mile of good road for every square mile of territory. South of the line in the forest reserve of the state

CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED

IN Washington State alone decay annually kills a billion feet of timber on reserved land; total sales are 7,000,000 feet; waste like that keeps lumber prices up.

of Washington there is a mile of road for every 550 square miles of territory, and the American roads are generally inferior to those of the Canadian province at that.

The entire 11,684,000 acres of national forests of the state of Washington, more than a fourth of the state's total area, contain exactly 34 miles of wagon road.

Conservation as practised aids monopoly in three ways.

First—by failure to settle agricultural and to develop mineral lands within the national forests, leaving the timber to be sold eventually to timber buyers rich enough to build logging railroads into and through the reserves. If cultivation of the soil and mining were encouraged on the lands in the public domain better adapted to those pursuits than to forestry, there would be transportation, and small lumbering would grow up, giving the logger and mill man of ordinary means an opportunity to purchase government offerings of timber. As matters stand only the very wealthy can bid successfully at such sales.

Second—by withdrawing great areas from use and refusing to sell and cut, the market values of Weyerhaeuser and other holdings are greatly enhanced.

The Olympic National Forest, in the state of Washington, is an example.

This reserve is triangular, surrounded on three sides by navigable waters. Between the boundaries of the national forest and the encompassing Pacific and its inlets is a row of townships heavily forested, and privately owned by some of the largest timber-holding organizations in the country.

The withdrawal of 100,000,000,000 feet of timber in the heart of this peninsula has added millions of dollars to the value of the outer private holdings, and in addition has left the owners of that outer strip in a position to command the whole when the government finally offers it for sale.

Third—by refusing to cut any but a small per cent. of the annual increase or new growth, and leaving hundreds of millions of feet to rot each year which should be cut, the price of lumber is maintained at a high

level—to the disadvantage of the consumer and the enrichment of the already wealthy timber holders.

Who is conservation to benefit if not the masses, and if present practices do not benefit the people as a whole, but do benefit the lumber barons, how can the policy pursued be called conservation?

Going from the national forests of Washington to those of Alaska conditions grow worse.

One Alaskan, for trade purposes with the states last year, was worth 394 Filipinos.

The whites in Alaska are all Americans and the natives are far less an alien race than the natives of the Philippines, but we are making aliens of the Alaskans and little brothers of the aborigines of our far-off Pacific Islands.

Alaska with nearly 600,000 square miles of area has nearly 27,000,000 acres of national forests. Of this total one-third is treeless, and another third sparsely covered with a worthless and stunted growth. Of the Chugach forest not 10 per cent. is worth the expense of administration, and that reserve alone covers more than 11,000,000 acres.

The Copper River & Northwestern Railroad, from Cordova to Kennecott, 197 miles, is built through the Chugach forest, but it was found cheaper to import ties and piling from Puget Sound than to use the trees along the right of way, which have neither strength nor life, being brittle and decaying quickly when cut and used.

These facts have been brought to the attention of the authorities again and again, but none of the lands withdrawn for alleged forestry purposes has as yet been restored to the public domain.

In the Philippine Islands, with 116,000 square miles, are many fine forests, but up to last October no national forests had been created there.

Alaska to-day consists of a few towns and mining camps governed by United States marshals and surrounded by alien territory on which Alaskans can venture as trespassers only. It is rich in every natural re-

THE Forestry Bureau thinks it wise to perpetuate forests which produce $33\frac{1}{3}$ cents per year per acre on land which if cultivated would produce from \$50 to \$500.

source, but those resources are as worthless as the minerals in the moon. They can't be touched by the people who require them.

Alaska has sore need of fuel for both domestic and industrial purposes, and because it has been denied the right to cut its own cord wood and mine its own coal—and I say "its own" advisedly—settlement and industry have languished.

Alaska belongs to the people of Alaska, the men and women who have gone there to settle and develop it. In no other way can a citizen of any American state acquire any interest in that territory.

Coal in the ground is valueless. In the cellar or in the bunkers of some railroad or factory it is an asset, a factor in human progress and comfort. Forests which can't be cut save under prohibitive penalties, but which may die and decay, are productive only of national waste.

Gold lured many souls to the Northland, but only the hardy and the brave remained to permanently people that domain. Alaska has cost the United States, original purchase price and administration, from 1867 to 1911, \$35,816,674. It has produced in minerals, furs and fish alone \$446,640,984. Of this more than \$195,000,000 was in virgin gold. All of this wealth has gone into American pockets, a contribution to the general welfare and prosperity of the entire nation.

National indifference to Alaska has become a fixed American habit. Looked upon from the first as folly, the country is still regarded as a place to go and dig gold from frozen muck. It is the "land of the frozen north," "ice-clad Alaska," to the multitude, a misnomer, for which guilt attaches to a few half-baked fake writers and novelists.

As a matter of fact interior Alaska is no colder than the two Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin or eastern Montana, and the cold nowhere in that whole territory is as penetrating and disagreeable as the cold of Chicago.

The finest berries, the crispest lettuce,

the sweetest cabbage in all the world, grow along Cook's Inlet. Apples ripened this year in and around Dawson, and the farms of the Klondike harvested \$30,000 worth of potatoes in 1911. Tomatoes and melons have been matured for years in the Tanana, and nowhere in all the world do grasses and flowers reach such luxuriance of growth and brilliant beauty.

Alaska is a land of long summer sunshine, of skies of deepest blue and waters which flash every jeweled color to the ravished eye. It is a land of plenty where nature has been most lavish, where there is everything to grip the heart and mind and fancy, and every material thing necessary to make it the habitat of civilized human beings.

It is by far more beautiful, more hospitable and more inviting than the coast of New England, but Alaska is not gaining population.

In a speech made on a visit to Seattle after his return from Africa Theodore Roosevelt said: "Alaska is capable of supporting a population as great as that of the Scandinavian peninsula." Under Roosevelt-Pinchot policies, however, the time when Alaska will have that population is far distant indeed. In 1900 the territory had 63,592 people. In 1910 it had 64,356, a gain of 764 in the decade, or 76.4 persons per year.

Norway and Sweden in 1910 had a combined population of 7,869,139, so that Alaska has to gain 7,804,783 people to equal Scandinavia's present figure. Gaining 76.4 people per year the time required for Alaska to reach Scandinavia's importance in point of population is only 102,156 years.

The fish are in the sea, the minerals are in the mountains, the qualities are in the soil, the water and the air to support millions of people; but settlement, the acquisition of lands, the right to cut a tree, dig a little coal, or do anything necessary to self-support or human comfort, are so restricted and abridged that Alaska has failed to attract population, while at the

CONSERVATION AS PRACTISED

LAND along the International Line is alike; just north of the line last year mines produced \$11,000,000; just south \$800,000; the south mineral land is forest reserve.

same time certain bleak, inhospitable north-west Canadian provinces to-day are fairly swarming with American settlers.

What is the reason for this?

The interior department has accepted some \$300,000 from American citizens for coal lands in Alaska. While some of this money was paid in nearly a decade ago there has been neither an acre of land granted nor a dollar returned.

But not one coal claim in all Alaska has been found regular or free from constructive fraud. This is the recent announcement of the interior department. In short not a single Alaskan with a coal claim has been found to be honest in intent. Each and every one is charged with having entered into some development, mining or transportation agreement with some one else. The law, as the department interprets it, is that no man can acquire a coal claim unless he acquires it "for his own individual use and benefit." And "own individual use and benefit" is capable of no elasticity. Nowhere in our statutes is there another phrase so rigid.

In disposing of cases before the land office it is learned that "own individual use and benefit" means that each locator must locate for himself, by his own personal act and not under the power of attorney law, a federal statute applied to Alaska, else he becomes a "dummy"; that he must pay for the claim with his own money, for should he borrow it he will be charged by some field agent with conspiring to give some one else a share of the "use and benefit"; that he must develop the mine himself, mine the coal himself, and carry it to market himself, on his back, presumably, for should he make a railroad company of himself to furnish transportation, he is charged with another form of conspiracy, and that is with a conspiracy to monopolize and "bottle up" the field for the benefit of himself as a railroad company.

In the light of requirements for successful coal mining in a field far removed from markets, for there is no market worth mining for in Alaska alone, and the trans-

portation of that coal on any possible basis of profit, the construction placed on the Alaska coal land laws shows bad faith on the part of the government.

Immoral as that construction becomes under analysis it is not so dishonest as the withdrawal orders which followed the successful blocking of the entrymen by means of these fraud charges.

The Chugach forest, let it be said here, was created under a false pretence. It was not formed for the purposes of forestry; but to prevent private acquisition of coal lands under any of the existing public land laws.

Classification of the lands in that reserve would show greater agricultural areas than forest; greater glacier areas than either, and mineral areas equal to more than fifty per cent. of the total.

The timber has no commercial value from a lumbering standpoint. A few areas near the coast contain pulp spruce, but these are comparatively small, and do not and never did justify the huge blanket withdrawal which constitutes the present Chugach forest.

In an effort to include in a reserve all of the coal lands where there was promise of development, and where locators were attempting to acquire titles, Mr. Pinchot drew boundaries which excluded the only timber worth while in Southern and Southwestern Alaska, and that is the forest growth on Cook's Inlet just to the west of the western limits of the Chugach forest.

He had no information in his possession touching forest growth in that region, but he was fully informed on all coal land development on the public domain within the territory of Alaska.

Alaska should have been exporting coal, making coke and smelting ore at its coast towns. Cordova should be as large as Butte, but it isn't.

Alaska is buying domestic fuel from British Columbia, paying from \$17 to \$30 per ton, shipping copper ore to Tacoma where it is smelted with coke from Aus-

ALASKA is buying domestic fuel from British Columbia for from \$17 to \$30 per ton while its own land is full of coal which it is not allowed to use.

tralia, and has lost population instead of gaining in the past five years. It runs one train a week over its only railroad and is suffering, as James Keeley, Editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, said after a visit there last July, "not from confiscation, but from suffocation."

"But," says some one, "we are going to have a coal land leasing law and open Alaska and develop its resources."

A coal land leasing in 1907 would have accomplished all that could have been done under private ownership.

Oil has now supplanted coal on the Pacific Coast. Steamships, locomotives, factories all use it. Coal mining in both Washington and British Columbia has decreased as a consequence of California's 77,000,000 barrel annual oil production. To compete with oil which brings from 30 to 40 cents per barrel at the well, coal prices must range from 90 cents to \$1.20 per ton at the mine, with transportation facilities equal to those in the oil fields. Alaska has no transportation facilities whatever.

Now, who will lease Alaska coal lands, let the terms be ever so generous?

The remedy for our conservation bungle is simple, and the machinery to apply it is a long-established and permanent adjunct of the federal government, the Geological Survey.

Classify the public lands. These four words contain the cure.

Until this is done, and done thoroughly, no government land policy satisfactory to all alike will be possible.

When this is done agricultural lands can be settled and used; mineral lands developed and forest lands held intact to perpetuate forest growth where forest growth is the best and most profitable crop for the lands so used. In short, when the lands of the public domain are classified the reservations can be limited to the purpose which they purport to serve.

Under our past and present policies boundaries have been marked around huge areas without proper or careful regard—

many times without accurate knowledge—of what those areas contained. The result is that mineral lands and agricultural lands have been locked up and withheld from their proper use; states deprived of the benefits which would accrue from development; stagnation has taken place of industry and activity, and wilderness perpetuated where there should be thriving and productive communities.

The Canadian provinces have worked along land classification lines, and there is marked development north of the boundary. Those provinces are attracting American settlers and American miners and prospectors to the disadvantage of our own northwestern states.

British Columbia is Canada's great forest and mineral province. British Columbia does not sell its timber lands. It leases them. Twenty-one years is the tenure, and some of the largest holders of "timber limits" in that province, as the leaseholds are called, are American lumbermen.

If our own public lands policy were as sensible the tide of American immigration into Canada would be diverted to our own unused, undeveloped domain.

Conservation can be made businesslike. It can conserve, which it is not doing now. The state of Washington has the proof, and it lies in its own wise administration of its own lands. Washington has a \$10,000,000 permanent school fund and still has in its possession 80 per cent. of its granted lands.

Under the ownership of the state are agricultural, timber, mineral, tide lands and oyster beds. These lands are classified and disposed of both by sale and lease. Federal reserves within the state are nearly five times the area of the state holdings, but the federal gross revenues from nearly 12,000,000 acres of lands in Washington are barely 1 per cent. of the state's revenues from 2,500,000 acres.

When conservation really conserves the West will be ready to believe in it and to support it. It must first get on a business basis.

